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Tell Draft

**Past**

As I’ve transitioned from elementary school, to middle school, then to high school, basketball always played a major role in my life. Throughout the years I gained a lot of skills and friends through the sport. I came such a long way in my basketball career and I am very proud of my accomplishments. Once I reached the eighth grade, I was able to teach Bitty Ball, which is an organization and camp for little kids to learn the game. I was thrilled to start and learned quickly that teaching others the skills I was taught and helping them to grow was something I strongly loved doing.

My most memorable moment while teaching the kids was when I finally got this little girl to make a basket. She was so tiny and had so much enthusiasm in learning the sport and doing her best. I loved her hard work and passion while trying to succeed and increase her skills. We worked together for weeks on end trying to get that ball into the basket. She got discouraged at times, but I always pushed her through it and encouraged her that she could do it. On one of the last days in camp, we were shooting hoops before the drills began and she asked me to help her with it yet another time. Of course I jumped to the opportunity like any other day and helped her out. She was practicing shooting and I was rebounding for her, giving her pointers as she went along, then finally, all this hard work paid off. She made the basket. I was so excited for her and she was so proud of herself. She ended up getting a medal at the end of the camp for hard work. I’ll never forget the way I helped her out and also how happy it made me feel.

I realized that day that helping others and pushing them to do their best can be so rewarding. The way it made me feel when that little girl finally accomplished her goal and knowing I had a part in it was priceless. This was the first big reassurance to know that one day I could be a great teacher. I never wanted to lose that feeling of being needed, wanted, and helpful for someone to accomplish their goals. Leadership was a skill I acquired through basketball that I would later need for my career.

**Present**

When coming to college, I joined a number of clubs and organizations. I have always been really into being a part of a team like I was in basketball and so joining a club seemed right up my alley. It also seemed like a good way to meet new people. One club that I really took interest in was the Best Buddies program. It helped me to be sure of teaching as a future career and also to familiarize myself with supporting students with disabilities. This was very helpful since I one day hope to teach in a classroom with inclusion of students that have disabilities.

One specific moment has impacted me a lot through this club. We all went to the college’s basketball scrimmage and the group got to meet the players and get pictures with them. They had such a fun time doing this and so did I. We acted as a team working together and cheered the whole game, sang songs, and shared laughs. It was a really close game and went into double over time. Though the game was long, they never got tired of it. We all enjoyed the whole game together cheering and screaming and hoping for them to win. I realized during this game that I could relate to these students a lot better than I expected. Though I had some doubts about working with students with disabilities before, this put all those feelings to the side. I knew we could be a team and I could coach them to better their skills and also push them to do their best, just like my coach did for me. I shared in many good conversations with some students and many good laughs. I knew then that this was where I belonged and where I could flourish as a teacher, supporter, coach, and most importantly, as a friend.

This experience helped reassure me that teaching students with disabilities was the right thing for me. Though I was nervous at first and didn’t know how to interact with them, I learned that it’s not as hard as I thought. I am acquiring skills I’ll need for a lifetime of working with students with disabilities and I’ll also be more comfortable and confident in myself when doing so. In order to be a good coach, you have to have a lot of experience with the subject or sport you’re teaching. Teamwork was another skill I acquired through basketball that I will need when teaching students with disabilities because in order to help them grow, we’ll need to work together to do so.

**Future**

Though this seems so far away now, I see my future in a classroom on my first day teaching my students the skills I acquired over the years. I want them to have the confidence to grow and flourish and hopefully support others and help them grow the same way they have. I want them to learn to pass on the skills they form to others and to find happiness in helping people grow into their own people with their own talents and relating them to their own. I will have an inclusive classroom with students with disabilities. I don’t think I could have ever gotten to this place in my life without the skills I acquired through basketball and taking those skills and putting them to good use in my everyday life. I take what I learned; hard work, determination, and responsibility, and I use them to push someone else to reach their full potential and never let them give up. The hard work, strength, teamwork, and leadership are all skills I’ll need for my students and myself as well, to succeed as a good teacher.